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A PIC-NIC IN ANDALUSIA.

It is not a little strange that a country of fog and showers like our own—a land in which the elements cannot be engaged to be propitious for half an hour together—in which the traveller knows

not whether, in the brightest day of June, he can safely trust himself abroad for two hours together without an umbrella—it is rather strange, I say, that, in a land like this, the bucolic form of entertainment known as the pic-nic, should have taken

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such firm possession of the public taste. Yet so it is. We are, perhaps, the most pic-nic-ing individuals on the face of the earth. Pic-nics are, however, by no means a British institution exclusively. I have formed one of an Andalusian pic-nic party; and now that years have rolled by, and the blue skies and grey olive trees, the whispering aspens and waving palms, the bright-coloured pomegranate trees, the funereal cypresses, and all the other accessories of sunny Andalusia, are no more than a fleeting dream, I will endeavour to revive some reminiscences of the past by describing an Andalusian pic-nic.

It is some five years since—that is to say, in the spring of 1850—that, rising from a hard litter of sugar-cane leaves, which, in the sultry clime of southern Spain, served for my bed, I heard the servant Julio's sonorous voice at the door, pronouncing the words Don Jose, which you must be informed, reader, was *my* name—that is to say, my Spanish name—for our Iberian friends have a strange dislike to the employment of surnames; therefore, in describing how Julio addressed me, I need not tell you mine.

I quickly dressed myself, and bade Julio walk in. He was the bearer of a note from a certain great personage of the little town in which I chanced to reside—a Spanish marquez. It was an invitation to a pic-nic. Now, whatever charms a pic-nic might have had for me at an earlier period of my life, I confess these charms had, to a great extent, gone by at the period to which I refer. Sundry reminiscences of treacherous showers coming down just when they were not wanted, and recollections of people running for shelter under rocks and trees—recollections, too, of torn dresses and aching heads, of colds, rheumatisms, and many other disagreeable concomitants of a British pic-nic, flashed across my brain. I was half inclined to find some excuse and remain at home. But, on the other hand, some little curiosity was at work. I was anxious to see with my own eyes what an Andalusian pic-nic might be like, and also to take a little relaxation after graver duties; and so, after a little consideration, I yielded, and, mustering my best collection of epistolary Castilian, I forthwith despatched to the kind marquez a note accepting her invitation.

Not an unimportant element in my contemplated refusal had been *mauvaise honte*. I had been only a short time in Spain, and was not yet quite ready at the thousand and one acts of conventional politeness, without a due observance of which a stranger stands a chance—nay, a certainty—of being set down as a very ill-bred, uncourteous individual. My sister, however, having been resident in Spain some five years, her teaching, I knew, would be valuable in respect of etiquette. I accordingly stated my difficulties to her.

"You need not fear," replied she; "all state ceremony is discarded at a pic-nic. Besides, Spaniards are not so ceremonious after all, when you know them well."

"That may be all very true," said I; "but when one sees two brothers walking on the *paseo*, studiously changing about to give each his proper share of the place of honour—Don Pablo going up on the right of Don Ramon to the end of the pro-

menade—then Don Ramon changing about so as to come down on the right of Don Pablo—when I am told that a lady is insulted if you ask her to take a glass of wine—"

"Trouble yourself no more with apprehensions on that score," said she, interrupting me, "of wine there will probably be none."

"Not at a pic-nic?"

"No. Then, as to offering a lady your arm, learn once and for all that *at* a pic-nic you may do so with propriety. Indeed, you must do it."

I began to be reconciled; for, in sober earnest, the "touch-me-not" principle to which I have adverted, and which, on all ordinary occasions, is so scrupulously observed in Spain, may lead an Englishman into very serious mistakes. After hearing a lady—a stranger, perhaps, and it may be of the very highest rank—address you by your christian name, as she invariably will do on the second or third interview, it does seem reasonable enough to suppose that she would shake hands, or, if you chanced to be going her way, take a proffered arm; but either would be a grave insult. Spanish ladies know nothing about taking walks, in the English sense of the word. Their life is, indeed, one of melancholy inanity. They get up early to matins; return home, amuse themselves with some in-door occupation (not reading), until the midday heat sets in; they then take a *siesta*, usually on a sofa, though some, I believe, go to bed. Thus passes the day, until near sunset, when, coming forth, each with an elegant mantilla over head and shoulders, they saunter on some public promenade ornamented with trees planted in long alleys and denominated the *paseo*. Here, in those shady groves, do the rank and beauty of Spanish towns walk until twilight has well set in—the ladies of a party in front, the gentlemen closely following. This arrangement *may* be agreeable to a Spanish gentleman; but, when I was thus circumstanced, I could hardly divest myself of the idea that I was some little poodle dog.

The afternoon, fast verging on the evening, of our pic-nic day, at length arrived, and we were ready. No Spaniard ever thinks of going abroad in the heat of the day, if he be not positively obliged. The sun was already waning fast, when, looking forth from the window of my sitting-room, I saw quite a cavalcade of gaily caparisoned horses, all mounted except four. These last were merely saddled, and were intended for the special use of myself and party. First came the marquez and her husband, each riding a graceful Andalusian horse, strutting, as all Andalusian horses do, like turkeys in a barn-yard, raising their legs very high up, curling their feet very far back, prancing and caracoling not a little, but progressing at a snail's pace forwards. Then came Doña Pepita on her poney, and Doña Emilia with her husband; the ladies all in white riding-habits trimmed with scarlet braid, white broad-brimmed sombreros and black plumes; the gentlemen each in *Majo* or Andalusian gala costume, and each armed with a long gun slung to his saddle. Lastly followed old Ramon, the servant, with embroidered leathern cartridge girt round his waist, and bearing a musket that, for aught I know, might have seen hard service elsewhere.

Ramon was leading a donkey—a real, tall, open-

visaged, sturdy-looking Spanish ass, who would have moved to admiration the puny, down-trodden donkeys of this northern clime, and shamed into utter insignificance the choicest English specimens of his own sex; for, to say the truth, a donkey, though famed for his ability "to rough it," as the phrase goes, only thrives under the genial influence of a warmly glowing sun. Magnificent though the donkey of old Ramon certainly was—a perfect model of asinine beauty, so far as blood, and flesh, and condition went—he laboured under that which nine Englishmen out of ten, or, it may be, ninety-nine out of a hundred, would have looked upon as a defect. He was, after the fashion of all Spanish donkeys and mules, close shaved. All his hair—tail, mane, ear-tufts and all—had been ruthlessly cut away, except the cross passing down over each shoulder, which, according to the superstitious notions of the country, served to ward off evil spirits. All had been ruthlessly removed, until his thick skin looked very much like the hide of an elephant. No! clean shaving may be very respectable in man, but, to my appreciation, it contributes nothing to the beauty of a donkey.

But Ramon's donkey merits a further description. He had not a saddle, nor had he panniers, but a whole pyramid of *mantas* (coarse Andalusian robes) lay on his back, all secured by a couple of tightly bound ropes, placed where girths, had he been saddled, ought to have been; and, finally, circling his neck, like some long box constrictor, were turned and twisted—how many yards I fear to say—of thick aloe-fibre cord. A word in passing about this cord.

To judge from what meets one's eye, saddle and bridle and harness-making are at a very low ebb in Spain; but this much, at least, admits of being said in favour of the above-mentioned arts—they afford abundant scope for artistic variation. The process of Andalusian saddle-making may be after one of many types; and as for Andalusian bridles, they may be described in general terms as consisting of a mysterious amalgamation of leather and rope, spliced, twisted, and contorted into all sorts of fanciful combinations. The materials being so complex, and their putting together so uncertain, accidents, as may be readily imagined, sometimes occur. Seldom can a journey of a few miles be made, but the paraphernalia of equitation break down; but the result is by no means what an Englishman might be inclined to suppose, provided only a sufficient length of rope be handy. Hence the wise precaution of coiling a store of rope around a horse's, mule's, or donkey's neck. Few, except an Andalusian, would dream of the multifarious uses to which a long halter may be rendered applicable on a pinch. In the first place, it serves the legitimate purpose of leading the beast; secondly, when uncoiled, it serves the purpose of whipping your neighbour's beast; and, thirdly, as I have already announced, it furnishes, bit by bit, all manner of harness-making expedients. Such, then, were a few of the uses of the very long halter which encircled, as I have said, the brawny neck of Ramon's donkey.

And now about Andalusian saddles. Occasionally there are such things as English gentlemen's and ladies' saddles to be met with; and, for the

credit of my pic-nic-ing party I must say we were provided with them. But such luxuries only fall to the lot of the country's magnates: the real Andalusian saddle, or *sella para montar*, being quite a different affair. In a general way, when ladies travel on horse, or mule, or donkey-back, the thing called an *hamuja* is employed. Fancy half-a-dozen railway rugs, or blankets—or, in the place of other things, a bale of old rags—firmly tied to a quadrupedal back—securely, by preference, but this condition is not indispensable—fancy, then, an arm chair fixed upon the aforesaid, its legs straddling across the pyramid of rags, rugs, sheep-skins, or cloaks, as the case may be, tied by ropes passing under the animal, girth fashion; and now picture to yourself a lady perched aloft, and you will have a tolerable notion of the *hamuja* and its occupant. Of course, the lady has no guiding power whatever: there she sits, at the mercy of the beast and the beast's driver. It is fortunate, too, if the beast in question be not a mule. Whip a horse, and the generous brute responds to the hint by quickening his pace; and even the greatly maligned donkey can show no greater malice when ill-disposed, than pricking back his ears and looking sulky; but as for a mule, no sooner do you whip him than he brings his locomotion to a stand-still, stops all at once, and tries to dismount you by violent kicking. Take my advice, reader, and never whip a mule.

Presently we were all mounted and away, the marquez and marquezas leading the van, the rest following two and two, and Ramon with his donkey bringing up the rear. Had it not been for the presence of the ladies, we might have appeared to an Englishman very much like a troop of mounted guerillas, or a band of robbers engaged in leading away our prisoners to some mountain cave. Away, however, we went, at first regularly and precisely enough, but the order was soon broken. Our path lay, in the outset, over a flat diluvial valley—the consolidated *débris* of continued washings from the tremendous Sierra-Nevada. The *azequia*, or old Moorish aqueduct which supplied the town with water, purled and rippled by our side, its banks fringed with date palms, wild vines, enormous cacti, and beautiful pomegranates. Nor, in enumerating the vegetable productions which decorated our path, must I forget to mention the treacherous sharp-spiked aloes. They gave me cause to remember them that day. As I was lost in admiration of the roseate tints produced by the sun, now low in his career, on the snowy tops of the Sierra-Nevada, the utmost peaks of which, although fifteen thousand feet above us, and more than forty miles away, were yet so clearly seen, and apparently so near, on account of the purity of atmosphere, which confers such a charm on southern Spain, that it seemed one might have surmounted them at a brisk gallop; and as I was tracing the continuous dash of snow-torrents as they descended headlong from rock and crag, until lost in the deep chasm, where the river Guadalfeo was soon to disclose his proportions, my reveries were violently interrupted by a thrust at my leg. It was the horny spike of a treacherous aloe; and these spikes are so hard and sharp, that ladies use them as stiletos for their fancy work. In the present instance, one of them

had perforated a thick leather boot—a result of frequent occurrence in the course of Andalusian wanderings.

We had climbed, in the course of our journey, a mountain spur. On commencing the descent, a vista of exquisite beauty opened before us! A merry dashing river—the Guadalfeo by name—ran at our feet; not a deep stream then, though nearly half a mile broad; or rather, the Guadalfeo was broken up into a series of rushing streams, meandering over a sand-bed half a mile in width. Occasionally, after a copious melting of mountain snows, the Guadalfeo swells to the dimensions of a grand river, and, being seemingly aware of the sudden expansive claims liable to be made upon him, the Guadalfeo keeps a goodly expanse of river-bed ready for the occasion. This beautiful river was to be our road for a distance of more than three English miles; not that we or our animals should be necessarily wading through water all that distance, for there were, as I have said, sand-banks between. Our course, nevertheless, was to be the river track—now in the water, now out of it; and, to pursue our travelling under these peculiar circumstances, required some judgment.

Arrived at the bank, where we were expected to take our first plunge, a number of gipsy-looking men made their appearance. No magician's wand could have produced them more suddenly. They lived in caves, as Spanish gitanos usually do, and gained a precarious subsistence by piloting travellers along the watery road. The beautiful Guadalfeo was propitious to us. The skirts of the ladies' riding habits were soaked, and we all were splashed; but beyond this, no accident occurred; and about an hour's riding through the half-appropriated bed of the Guadalfeo brought us to our journey's end—a country villa or retreat of the marquis, almost close to the water's brink, but nearly lost to external view in a bower of orange trees, aloes, palms, and vines. Arrived here, we dismounted. Ramon and his donkey came forward. The alforjas were taken off; their contents (chiefly sweetmeats) distributed; the pyramidal heap of mantas, capas, skins, and rugs which had formed the saddle was removed, and spread on the ground for our accommodation. For the rest, all was easy. Not a bottle of wine, not a tongue or chicken, or any other cellar or larder cheer, had we provided; but we had an abundance of sweetmeats, and each one of our company plucked oranges for himself and his lady companions. Our potations were cool draughts of water drawn from a neighbouring well—*water mas fria que el nieve*, (water as cold as snow), as the markeza averred. Such was the good cheer of our Andalusian pic-nic.

Then, by way of amusement, we had the national instrument, a guitar, and Ramon touched it skilfully—(people of condition do not play the guitar in Spain)—and Doña Emilia asked me if it were really true that English ladies, on being married, changed their names; on which interesting subject I duly informed her. Then the marquis asked me if I had seen the *toros* (bull-fights), which at that time I had not; and, yielding to certain feelings of my own on that matter, I ventured to hint that it was a sport unworthy of so grand a nation. “Cosa de España—cosa de

España,” rejoined he quietly—“a matter peculiar to Spain”—and, turning the tables upon me, he asked if it were not really a fact that we English sold our wives in the market-place when tired of them?—whether I considered *that* worthy of so grand a nation as Inglaterra—whether more refined than bull-fighting? In short, I soon found that as sure as you throw bull-fighting in a Spaniard's teeth, he throws wife-selling in yours. But Doña Emilia had the courage to inform me *she* did not like bull-fighting; and this sentiment, I am happy to inform my readers, is on the increase amongst Spanish ladies. I am unable to say so much for the men.

Having enjoyed the balmy air and the delicious fruits, the pic-nic came to an end. Would that all English ones were as innocent! If I am asked the reason why I have chronicled the relaxation of that day, I may say that my Andalusian pic-nic illustrates a national virtue on which Spain may well plume itself—the virtue of temperance. Our excursion served as a real relaxation, and sent us back to our ordinary engagements with spirits refreshed and health recruited; not with mind and body jaded, the head aching, and the frame fevered with excess—results too often the sequel of a similar recreation with us. We returned home by the way we came, trusting implicitly to the judgment of our faithful steeds. Night had fallen when we got home, and the cicada's* shrill chirp, and the bull-frog's croak, serenaded us on our way, tired somewhat, but delighted; and morning dawned next day over no stupified heads or red noses—thanks to the simple fare of an Andalusian repast.

A DIPLOMATIC LESSON;

OR,

AN INTERVIEW BETWEEN A YOUNG AND AN OLD
AMBASSADOR SEVENTY YEARS AGO.

AMONG the many mysteries of this perplexing world of ours, there is perhaps none more baffling to the human understanding than the science of politics. We all talk politics; but who amongst us can pretend to understand them? There are, for instance, the “four points” which, for many months past, have been discussed alike in the court and the camp, the council-chamber and the market-place. North, west, east, and south have the “four points” been spoken of as the only possible basis of peace; and yet, what are they? and what do they mean? Do they not vary in hue and aspect just as they happen to be looked at from London or Paris, from Vienna or Berlin?

If it were permitted to embody so impalpable an idea as this recent watchword of the political world, might we not represent France as rushing onwards with a deadly weapon, tipped with four sharp and polished points of steel, which she was preparing to plunge into the very heart of Russia; England, firmly grasping a similar weapon, whose iron points, however, were less acute and less polished than those of her gallant ally, while the sturdy bearer stood rather in the attitude of readiness than of attack; Austria, with courtly smile,

* Called *cigarra* in Spanish.

stretching out her hand towards the four-pointed weapon, which lay upon her council-chamber table; while Prussia glanced uneasily at the warlike symbol placed before her.

Doubtless, however, in these days of investigation and discovery, some real progress will be made in the science of diplomacy; and, with the humble intention of giving a useful hint to our readers, gathered from the experience of the past, we are about to describe an interview which took place about seventy years ago between an old and a young ambassador—one who was preparing to withdraw from the stormy arena of public life, and one who was just about to enter upon it.

It was just after the termination of the American war, and the young count de Sègur had, like many of his fellow countrymen, returned from the United States, full of ardour for liberty, and impatient with the monarchical absolutism of his own country. To these democratic tendencies he united the gay courtesy and the pleasure-loving spirit so characteristic of one whose early years had been passed at the court of Maria Antoinette. He had, however, found leisure for intellectual pursuits, and was gifted with a natural aptitude for business, which had been improved in the cabinet of his father, the marquis de Sègur, at that time minister of war in France. The young count was by no means insensible to his own advantages, either as regarded position or natural ability; but he was not the less surprised when Monsieur de Vergennes, the minister for foreign affairs, having urged him to enter the diplomatic career, added that he had in view for him a post of no less importance than that of minister plenipotentiary and envoy extraordinary to the court of Russia. Sègur was at first much flattered by so distinguished a mark of the minister's confidence in his wisdom and ability; but a moment's consideration sufficed to repress the rising vanity. He remembered that he was living under an absolute monarchy, that his father was one of the ministers of state, and that, under those circumstances, the question too often is, not who is the man best fitted for a high and responsible office, but rather, what situation is best suited to gratify the ambition of those who are in favour at court.

The young *diplomate* now devoted himself to the acquisition of such knowledge as might qualify him for the difficult and complicated duties of his intended mission. He withdrew from the brilliant circles of Paris, and passed his days amid the dusty tomes of official correspondence, or in the society of statesmen who were familiar with all the intricacies of diplomatic life.

Amongst other public men of note, he visited the celebrated comte d'Aranda, the Spanish ambassador at the court of Versailles, who had justly gained a high reputation by the firmness, secrecy, and promptitude with which he had contrived, in defiance of the prejudices and intrigues of his enemies, in the course of a single day, and at the very same hour, to close all the Jesuit monasteries in Spain, and thus annihilated, within that kingdom, this powerful and ambitious order. There was a great deal of originality in the physiognomy as well as in the language and manners of this remarkable man. His vivacity was grave, his gravity was ironical and often full of satire. He had

a strange custom, which, from its constant recurrence, became wearisome as well as ridiculous, of saying almost at the end of every sentence—"Entendez vous? Comprenez vous?" (Do you hear? Do you understand?)

The young ambassador expectant, on being ushered into the presence of the comte d'Aranda, alluded gracefully to the kindness he had already experienced from him, and, expressing his own anxiety to fulfil aright the high duties of his new position, added that he would be more hopeful of succeeding in his task if the count would give him a few hints in the science of diplomacy, and thus allow him to reap the benefit of his long experience.

"Ah!" exclaimed the old statesman, smiling, "you are alarmed at the difficulties of diplomacy. You expect to be obliged to pore over old maps and dusty volumes, and you want a few lessons in politics? Well; I am ready to teach you as soon as you please. *Entendez vous? Comprenez vous?* Come to me to-morrow at noon, and I promise that, in a very little time, you shall be quite *au fait* at the whole politics of Europe. *Comprenez vous?*"

Sègur thanked him cordially for his kind offer, and on the following day he failed not to present himself punctually at the appointed hour. He found the aged ambassador seated in an easy chair, with a large desk placed before him, on which lay outstretched the map of Europe.

"Sit down by my side," said he, "and let us begin our lesson at once. The aim of diplomacy is, as you already know, to ascertain the strength, the means, the intentions, the rights, the hopes, and the fears of the several European powers, so that you may be able to conciliate or divide them, to oppose or to unite with them, as the safety and advantage of your own country may seem to require. *Entendez vous? Comprenez vous?*"

"Perfectly," replied Sègur; "and it is precisely this conviction which makes me feel how vast is the knowledge to be acquired, as well as the difficulties to be overcome."

"Not at all, my dear friend; not at all," rejoined the count d'Aranda, in a brisk and lively tone of voice. "Only listen to me patiently for a few moments, and I will make you quite *au fait* at the whole matter. Look at this map. You see there a sketch of all the European states, great and small, their extent and their limits, their position and their shape. Examine the whole well. You will perceive that not a single one of these countries presents any regularity of form. Not one of them is either square or oblong, oval or round. There are always some swelling or retreating margins; some deep recess or outstretching projection. *Entendez vous? Comprenez vous?*"

"Look at this Russian colossus! You perceive on the south the peninsula of the Crimea stretching out into the Black Sea, and which once belonged to Turkey. There are the principalities of Moldavia and Wallachia, whose borders lie upon the same sea. How well they would fit into the framework of Russia!—especially if, glancing more northward, Poland was included in the acquisition. Still further north lies Finland, bristling with rocks. She belongs to Sweden, and

yet she is close to St. Petersburg. *Comprenez vous?*

"Let us pass on to Sweden. Do you see Norway, which is a long margin of land belonging naturally to the Swedish territory? Well; it is a tributary of Denmark. *Entendez vous? Comprenez vous?* Let us travel into Prussia. Observe how straggling is this kingdom! How many hollows need to be filled up to make it tolerably substantial on the side of Saxony and Silesia, as also in the direction of the Rhine! *Entendez vous?* And Austria, what shall we say about her? She possesses the Low Countries, from which she is separated by the whole of Germany, while Bavaria, which does not belong to her, lies at her very door. *Entendez vous? Comprenez vous?* Again, you will find this same Austria in the very heart of Italy. How admirably Venice and Piedmont would fill up her territorial framework! *Comprenez vous bien?*

"Come, I have told you enough for to-day. You will guess now how desirous all these powers must be to fill up their gaps, to retain their jutting points, and to swell out each hollow part, as opportunity may offer, into fair and round proportions. Well, my young friend, methinks this single lesson will suffice for you, as in what I have now said are involved the sum and substance of all political science. *Comprenez vous?*"

"Ah," replied Sègur, smiling, "I understand so much the better, M. le Comte, because I am this moment casting my eye upon Spain, and observe upon her western boundary a long and beautiful margin called Portugal, which would fit in perfectly into the Spanish framework."

The old ambassador laughed heartily.

"Ah," said he, "I perceive you have perfectly comprehended me. You are now as wise a diplomatist as any of us. Adieu! Advance gaily, boldly, and you will prosper."

The count de Sègur thanked him cordially for his lesson and withdrew. Thus ended this brief and unscrupulous lecture on the science of diplomacy.

"TO PARIS IN TWELVE HOURS."

THUS runs the announcement on the coloured placards which, in various parts of London, now greet the eye of the intending traveller. It is rather a startling word of promise to one who in times past has been accustomed to make a three or four days' journey of the same transit; it is a promise, however, that is not broken, but performed with the expedition, regularity, and punctuality of almost a perfect system. There are means of getting to Paris which are ostensibly cheaper, but as they involve a longer delay on the road, and often enforce a night's lodging and a hotel bill in addition to the expense of the journey, the advantage they hold out is but questionable, even as regards the saving of cash, while the loss of time to a traveller whose time is of any value is more than double the worth of any saving he could possibly effect. It is for these reasons that, having resolved on an excursion to Paris, we find ourselves, at eight o'clock on a fine morning early in the present month of June, seated in a carriage of the South-eastern Railway, watching in a cool corner the

bustle and whirl of preparation, the flight of luggage, the eager and breathless faces of its owners, and the calm official *nonchalance* of the railway guards, as, under their superintendence, the mountains of boxes and trunks and the bewildered faces of their proprietors vanish by degrees into the solid vans and cushioned carriages, till the bell rings out the signal for starting.

As the whistle sounds, and we roll slowly from beneath the shadow of the station, we remark that our companions in the journey are chiefly foreigners, among whom is an aged German, who speaks but a word or phrase or two of English, with his son, who speaks none at all. A lively French gentleman has already begun a rapid conversation with the old German, which continues for near an hour without a pause, and is at length interrupted by the reverberations of the Reigate tunnel. It is resumed the moment the noise abates, and forms a running accompaniment to the clatter of the whole route. At Tunbridge we alight for a few moments, and walk about the platform, fancying that our legs must need stretching after a run of so many miles; but in three minutes more we are again dashing on through the cornfields and hop-grounds of Kent, at the rate of thirty miles an hour. Already we fancy that we begin to smell the sea-breezes. "Folk-a-stone?" ejaculates the silent young German interrogatively. "No," we reply, "Ashford." Here we halt for a minute to water the engine, and then on again through a wild, downy, swelling, and half-inclosed district, catching now and then a distant streak of the grey sea line, and finally, after a rapid run through a chalk cutting, emerging upon a grand view of the Channel in front, and the straggling little town of Folkstone lying low in the foreground. On we go over the heads of the town-people—across the harbour with its shipping—draw to a stand at the station, and are admonished by the guard to lose no time in getting on board. The steamer, a small but rapid boat, lies puffing and ready for flight, and in half a minute we have descended to her deck, where above two hundred fellow-passengers are taking up their position under the wide awning which overshadows the vessel. But there is a mountain of luggage to come; and lo! it is already coming like a mountain cascade, literally dashing upon the deck at the rate of a hundred packages a minute at least, down a couple of inclined planes. As fast as the torrent pours down, it is received by a band of porters and passed into the hold and stowed away; but the hold is soon full, and will hold no more: and now ascends a pile of leather, canvass, and brass nails, haystack-high, reared amidships, leaving barely room to pass round it.

No sooner is the last package on board than away go the sliding-boards. "Cast off!" cries the captain; splash goes the cable in the brine. "Turn ahead easy—go on!"—and we are out of the harbour, bounding on the gently heaving billows, and Folkstone and her grey-green mounds and cliffs are running away in our rear. There is a cool and pleasant breeze breaking the waves into innumerable ripples, each one reflecting the midday sun in dazzling crescents of golden fire. We pass near a fleet of fishermen lazily pursuing their avocation, and we desecry with the telescope, low down in the

horizon, the long hull of a war-steamer, bound, in all likelihood, with troops and ammunition on board, for the Crimea. Before us, the coast of France, first discernible while we sat in the railway carriage, breaks gradually into a distinct shape; and now, by the aid of the glass, we catch a view of the buildings, the barracks, and the camping-ground of the troops in the neighbourhood of Boulogne. Now the swell of the sea is felt as we near the Gallic coast; and rosy-faced ladies grow pale, and pale-faced ones grow paler, and, staggering on the arms of male protectors and stewardesses, vanish into the cabins below. Now the custom-house and hotels of Boulogne, smiling in the clear pure air, seem to run to meet us; up goes a signal, a couple of disks of iron bisecting each other, to announce that there are above two hundred of us on board; there is a stir among the sailors, the captain hails the steersman and signals him with waving palm, and in a few minutes more we are gliding between the long piers, after a voyage of exactly one hour and three-quarters.

As the vessel is moored fast to the quay, a gangway is let down, and the passengers are summarily marched up on *terra firma*, where we find ourselves inclosed like a herd of sheep in a pen, and the objects of interesting speculation to a host of Boulogne fish-women and market-women, in short petticoats and wooden shoes, and all the idle rabble of the town who have nothing better to do than to criticise the importations from England. The only outlet to the pen is into the custom-house, into which we flow as naturally as water through a funnel. Here we wait a few minutes in an antechamber, and, presenting our passports to the doorkeeper, are let through, one at a time, to the examining-room, where our carpet-bags are examined—the examination being merely a glance at their contents—and then we are turned into the town to make the best of our way to the station. The station is, perhaps, a quarter of a mile from the custom-house; and the traveller who shall proceed thither on foot will feel no lack of company on the way. The moment he escapes from the custom-house, he is besieged by a band of touters, each of whom invites him, in French or broken English, to refresh himself at the inn or hotel of which he is the representative. The touter invariably affirms that there is abundance of time to dine; that an excellent dinner is ready at his hotel; and that he will see you to the station before the train is ready to start. Now, the fact is, there is no time to spare, and in all probability, if you attempt to dine at Boulogne, you lose the train, and may have to stay all night—a consummation of which the touter is perfectly aware, and has no objection to bring about. If, refusing to dine, you persist in proceeding to the station at once, then a shoal of boys will assalt you for your bag, will volunteer to carry it for a franc all the way, and will not cease their clamour until you have nearly performed the service yourself. This rabble is a perfect pest, and should be dispersed; they are a worthless set of idle people, demoralised by the lucky windfalls they occasionally meet, and unfitted, by the chances of earning tenpence in five minutes, for the labours of regular industry. The Boulogne station is a creditable and convenient building, and there, if there be time for refresh-

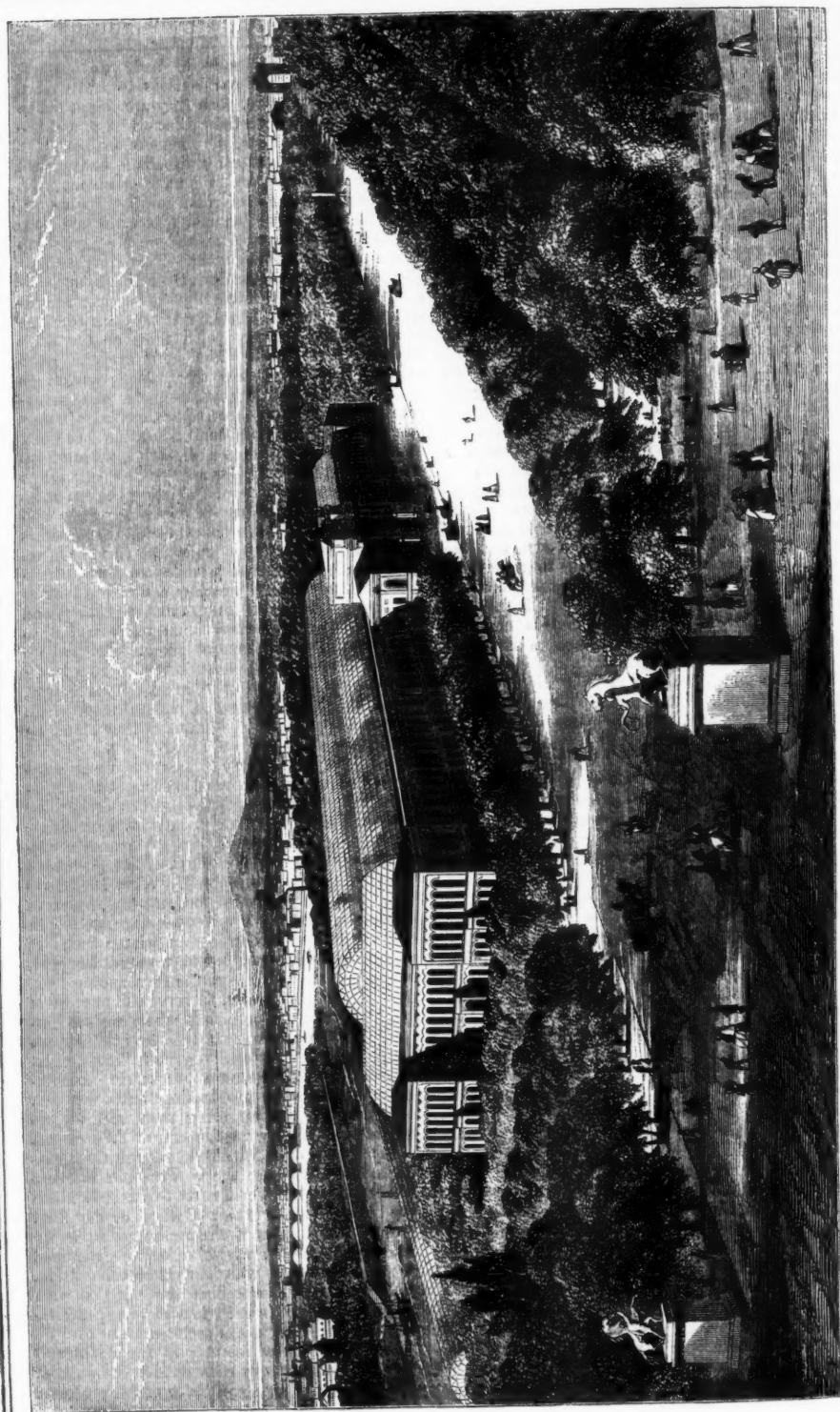
ments, refreshments may be had: we cannot, however, recommend our readers to make more use of this opportunity than they are compelled to make, as the prices we thought exorbitant, and the provisions, to our taste, were none of the best.

While we are listening to some unequivocal complaints on this score from an Englishman, who declares that a taste of roast meat and a cup of coffee have cost him four and ninepence, the door of the waiting-room opens, and we are invited to take our places in the train. This time we find our fellow-travellers exclusively English, and observe that they are gratified by the superior accommodation which the French second-class carriage presents when compared with those on the other side of the channel. Not only are the seats cushioned, but the backs are padded; and there are pegs for shawls, hats, bonnets, and great-coats, and curtains to the windows, so that you may breathe the fresh air without admitting the dust.

We are scarcely seated and settled, when off we go—the route leading for many miles through a district of sandy dunes, and skirting the sea at no great distance. The day is exquisitely clear and fine, and we draw down the whole of the windows to admit the breeze and enjoy the view. On we rush, at about twenty-five miles an hour, over a level tract of country wearing a desolate look at first view, for want of hedges and inclosures, and the absence of the neat homesteads which so thickly dot the landscape at home. Everywhere the railway crosses the common road upon a level; and everywhere it is women, in short blue gowns, red kerchiefs, and white caps, and not men, whom we meet and pass at the stations as they stand by the rails waving the signal flags.

The face of the country improves as we advance farther into it, but still has a wild aspect. Cultivation is but partial, and the land is divided by narrow trenches into long thin slips alternating with different crops. Anon we come upon a district half covered with ponds and ditches, in which flat-bottomed boats are moored. What land there is, is dug up and stripped for peat-turf, heaps of which are piled up for miles together, to dry in the sun previous to housing for winter fuel. If any portion of the land is not ravaged for peat, there we find flags cut from the surrounding fens, laid out to dry in the sun, to serve the purpose of thatch. Of the agriculturists whom we see employed in the fields, nineteen-twentieths are women; some are at work on their knees, thinning cabbage-beds or onions, or sowing turnip-seed in drills; some are leading out cows and calves to grass, and tethering them securely, to save their meddling with the crops. We cannot catch a glimpse of a hay-stack, though the grass looks fine and ready for the mower; nor is there to be seen along the whole route to Paris, so much as the ghost of a single rick of wheat or any kind of grain. The houses of the peasantry are nearly all of one pattern—a mud-walled cottage, thatched with flags, and neatly whitewashed on the outside. In the villages, these cabins are mingled with brick buildings, and in each is a picturesque little church of a superior class of architecture.

We stop for a few minutes at the Montreuil station; but the railway runs outside the walls of the old town, and we see little or nothing of that



THE PARIS EXHIBITION.

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or its inhabitants. More strips of land, variously cultivated—more peats piled in heaps—more flags thrown out to dry—more white-walled huts—more ponds and ditches—and another hour's run upon the rail—and we are at Abbeville.

Here, also, we do not enter the town walls, though a pretty numerous company are expecting the train, and we part with a few of our passengers and take up others. In five minutes we are on again towards Amiens. The country now begins to improve more visibly, and we obtain a view now and then of a little vineyard, where a figure in blouse is crouching among the vines, pruning-knife in hand. The huts of the peasants are of a better class, the villages more numerous, and the villagers prospering better than those nearer the coast. We catch a few extensive views as we bowl along; but the absence of anything like fine timber is a sad drawback to the picturesque. Nine-tenths of the trees thus far—and the case is not very different up to the very fortifications of Paris—are all of one sort—a species of white poplar, which rarely grows to the bulk of a child's body, or aspires above the height of thirty or forty feet. From the wood of this tree almost everything is made; it forms the floors and joists of the cottages, the posts of the electric telegraph, the material for boat-building, for carts and wagons, for charcoal and firewood, and for domestic furniture. It is planted in unimaginable numbers, and whenever the prospect opens to a great extent, it is an extent of innumerable poplar trees in all stages of growth, and standing in rows intersecting each other in all directions. Their rapid growth is no doubt the secret of their popularity, taking into account the means they offer of supplying the indispensable fuel.

At Amiens we enter the town through a short tunnel or archway, and here the train stops for twenty minutes, that the passengers may refresh. The proprietor of the refreshment rooms adopts a very sensible plan. As soon as the coming of the train is signalled, he begins carving for the common table, and by the time it stops at the station, plates of meat and vegetables are served, at which the passenger can sit down, if he choose, the moment he alights, and partake of a moderate meal, well prepared, at a moderate cost, and may add coffee, wines, or London porter, at a reasonable price. The station at Amiens has also its bookseller's stall, which offers for sale its volumes of the French Railway Library at a franc each. The stall is precisely after the model of those in England, and the books, which are chiefly of the light literature of France, are cheap and neatly got up, in flimsy yellow or green covers of paper, not intended to last through more than a single reading. The bibliophile is loud in their praise, and succeeds in pushing off a number of copies among the passengers; but he has no newspapers for sale—no periodicals—nothing that tells of the present state of popular feeling—any demonstration of which, by means of the press, seems tacitly avoided. From the station we get a view of a portion of the town, and, by walking the length of a street, have a glimpse of the cathedral; but there is no time for explorations, though the temptation is great. Our old German friend and his son, who have been refreshing in the *salon*, now accost us on the plat-

form, the former inquiring "wedder mosh plass for two" in the compartment where we ride; it seems he has got among a company of merry-makers from London, who will not be at the pains to understand, and is doomed to silence. But our compartment is full, and it is too late now to change quarters. As he is expressing his regret the bell rings; he gives us a hearty grip of the hand, and with a ceremonious bow enters his carriage, and we see him no more.

We leave Amiens behind us, and, with steam well up, soon get into a rattling pace of thirty miles an hour at the least. We are now in the populous heart of France; the signs of industry and prosperity are around us; the land is better cultivated and more respectably wooded; clusters of miniature elms and of dwarf oaks dispute the monopoly of the white poplars, and among them rise the snowy crowns of the white hawthorn, now in full blossom, and the scarlet domes of the red chesnut, with its thousand crimson pinnacles, whose delicate odour scents the air. Gardens, fragrant with flowers and gay with the luxuriant lilac and pendulous laburnum, announce at intervals our arrival at the suburbs of town or village. The fields are no longer desert and forlorn, but spotted with the blue, and red, and white which denotes the summer costume of the female labourers, who stand and gaze at us for a moment as we rush by. Now appears in sight the tall chimney of a manufactory belching smoke; and that is no sooner gone than there is a succession of white villas, with flowery verandahs, followed by an old-fashioned *château*, embowered in its nest of foliage, and surrounded, with its parks and pleasure-grounds, by substantial stone walls. Through all this we fly almost at an "express" pace, because we are the objects of general regard; for, whatever a Frenchman drives, be it a lame donkey or a locomotive, he will drive at its utmost speed so long as the world is looking on. But now comes a tract of open country, and through that our speed is moderated for a while to the old pace, until we are within a mile or two from Creil, which, of course, it behoves us to enter in style, and, accordingly, we thunder on again.

At Creil we stop for a few minutes, and those who choose can take a slight refreshment there; but it is the last stoppage before we reach Paris, and we are not inclined to alight. The towns and villages lie thicker together as we approach the capital, which is the reason why we go at such a capital pace, as we are whirled past them. We cross a noble river and several of its tributary streams, and skirt its waters for a considerable distance on its northern bank. The old mud-walled huts have long since disappeared, and neat cottages or farmsteads of brick or stone have taken their place. Villas, country-seats, *châteaux*, and rows of genteel white houses are seen peering above the trees, and on all sides are the indications of populousness and prosperity. The influence of the metropolis extends many miles beyond the metropolitan centre, and the overflow of its wealth and luxury is manifest by a thousand indications, the nearer we approach it. But, while coming there, a sudden thought strikes us, suggesting a natural question—Where is the commerce of the Northern Railway of France? We

have travelled above a hundred and sixty miles since we left Boulogne between twelve and one o'clock, and we have met but three, or at most four trains, and those were all passenger trains, consisting, like our own, of six or seven carriages at most, while some had only three. Such a journey upon one of the great English lines would have given us fifty trains at least meeting us on the route. How can the French railway pay its expenses with passenger traffic alone, and with but three or four trains a day for so long a route? The answer, we suspect, will be found in the fact that the French railways have been constructed at a cost bearing but a fractional proportion to the cost of our own—that the land has been taken at its simple value—that labour is correspondingly cheap—that the engineering has been carried out with a view to the saving of expense, rather than to the performing of apparent impossibilities—and that the cost of maintenance and working (a considerable share of the latter being, as we have seen, confided to women) bears no proportion to the same expenses with us.

The shadows of twilight descend upon us as, amid the silence of our fellow-passengers—a silence which invariably precedes the termination of a long journey—we revolve these speculations in our mind. Suddenly we find ourselves passing beneath the shadow of lofty buildings; then follow the crashing echoes of a tunnel; voices cry out "Paris! Paris!" our pace slackens, and ere we have proceeded another furlong, the train is motionless beside the platform. It is twenty minutes past eight o'clock—as near as may be to the precise moment that we started from the station at London Bridge in the morning—when, seizing our carpet-bag, into which we have crammed all we shall want of luggage during our temporary sojourn, we make the best of our way from the station. No man stops us on the suspicion of smuggling wine or provisions in a carpet-bag; but we are free the moment we alight. On leaving the station, a dozen cards are thrust into our hands by persons of both sexes, recommending their own hotels or lodgings as the most unexceptionable and desirable to be met with. But we have made up our minds on that score, and, beckoning to a *remise* on the look-out for a customer, hail it and step in. The driver gives us a card, "No. 254—Preserve this ticket in case of complaint." "A la Boulevard de Bonne Nouvelle," say we; and off we jog over the well-known pavements of Paris. What a prodigious height the houses appear, after the dumpy tenements of old London! How clean and white they are! How sharp and clear their outlines against the evening sky, in which the stars begin to twinkle forth as though they came on purpose to light up this particular spot alone. Deeper and deeper falls the twilight as, amid the gathering gloom, we rumble on over the uneven stones: and now we stand still—there is a block in the way—our driver is exchanging compliments, not to be found in Chesterfield, with a yellow omnibus measuring twenty feet in length; there is the cracking of whips, and a resonant ringing of roughly roared words, and—crash! off goes the omnibus, and we follow in its wake down a long street which debouches plump into the middle of the Boulevards.

What a spectacle it is, to be sure, with its miles of stately structures, their white faces relieved against the cool blue sky; its gorgeous saloons dazzling with light and mirrors like so many Aladdin's palaces; its avenues of green trees; its lordly promenades; its throngs of carriages; and its myriad population lazily lounging, promenading, or seated at their *al-fresco* suppers. What a magnificent—Our admiration is disturbed by a sudden pull-up: "V'la l'Boulevard de Bonne Nouvelle, M'sieur!" We alight, discharge the *remise*, and from hence proceed on foot to our hotel, which is not far off.

The first thing a traveller has to do on arriving at Paris, supposing him to have secured a lodging, is to deposit his passport in the hands of his landlord, in order that he may enter the name, profession, birth-place, and age of his new inmate in his books for the information of the police. Having accomplished this necessary preliminary, we pocket our passport, as it serves as a card of introduction to various interesting places; and being now free as air to wander where we choose through the world of Paris, and being further desirous to make the most of our time, we sally forth to gratify our curiosity at once, after an absence of more than twenty years. The results of our observations, the reader who is desirous of knowing them, may chance to find in future papers. One of the first objects visited by us was, as might be expected, the newly-opened Exhibition, of which we herewith present a representation. Our visit to it will be described hereafter.

THE FIRST SHIP TO ST. PETERSBURG.

THE curious traveller who chanced to ramble through Amsterdam about the beginning of the present century, must have remarked, in a narrow street behind the old Weigh-house, an antiquated but substantial mansion, with its gable, in Europe's ancestral fashion, turned to the street, and over the door a quaint carving of a ship in full sail, bearing down to the help of another evidently sinking; while, by way of motto, was cut in good large letters this homely Dutch proverb: "God's service hath sure wages."

The old Weigh-house was removed in the brief reign of king Louis, father of his present majesty of France, because it obstructed the view from the Stadthouse, which for a time became his palace. The narrow street anciently known as Skipper's Lane, and inhabited by the better class of burghers, was consequently remodelled, and henceforth lost its distinctive name and character. The antiquated house is gone; but the story it commemorated we now proceed to tell our readers.

In the year 1703, when the city had almost reached the zenith of its commercial prosperity, and was sending ships to every shore from England to Japan, the Skipper's Lane was a respectable street, though two carriages could scarcely pass in it, and the house in question was occupied by Andrew Wybes. It had been built by Andrew's great-grandfather, one of those Protestant merchants who fled from Antwerp before the duke of Alva and the Inquisition, to establish trade and find freedom of conscience on the swampy flats of

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the Amstel. How commerce followed the exiles, and what exertions the shrewd Dutchmen made to direct its course from the Spanish-ruled city to their own free capital, are matters of history. Amsterdam became the heir of Antwerp, and when the great Indian traffic began to flow into its port, one of the first warehouses was that of Van Wybes, Cramer, and Co.

The firm dealt in all manner of Indian stuffs, gums, and spices, which, after the fashion of those days, they imported in their own ships, the "Fair Trader" and the "Good Courage." These barks arrived every second spring with free cargoes, and sailed again at midsummer, deeply laden with cheese, gin, and linen, for the Dutch colonies in India.

The imports were sold to traders, who came not only from all corners of Holland and the Flemish cities, but also from Germany, France, and England, in search for Indian wares, to Amsterdam; while the exports were bought up at the winter fairs of the seven provinces by the good merchants themselves, who went thither with large retinues and heavy purses. This primitively conducted business could not fail to be profitable, and for two generations the fortunes of the firm, like those of their city, flourished, their warehouse was enlarged, and their ships renewed; the chiefs sat among the mighty sirs, as Amsterdam calls her town council, and Andrew's grandfather became his mightiness the burgomaster. From that hour of meridian glory the house rapidly declined. Merchants at their guild suppers (which came off once a year, and were the only festivities permitted by old Dutch industry), used to enliven the feast by debating whether it were the loss of the "Fair Trader," which went down in the monsoon when homeward bound with all her crew and good cargo—a speculation in palm wine, which did not suit the taste of Holland; the inundation of their warehouse, in a rising of the Amstel; or the taking of the "Good Courage" by an English privateer in the brief war with our second Charles, that brought Van Wybes, Cramer, and Co., not to the Gazette—for that was a rare and memorable misfortune at the close of the seventeenth century—but to have part of their warehouse let and not a ship at sea.

Andrew and his hereditary partner, Karl Cramer, succeeded to the business under these conditions. Both were industrious, temperate men; careful to keep what had descended to them, and, if possible, retrieve the trade of their house. They sat side by side in the Hoche Kirk, and were next door neighbours in the Skipper's Lane; but observant people noted this difference in the practice and character of the partners, that while Andrew would trust any chance, Karl would venture nothing. A house thus divided against itself could not stand, particularly in the trying time of Louis le Grande's wars, which then intervened. Moreover, their different politics had the same effect in both cases; for Karl and Andrew gradually decreased in custom and substance, till they were obliged to give up their warehouse, with all its remaining contents, to a neighbouring merchant who had long wanted the premises, and was their principal creditor. When all claims against them were discharged, neither had anything to retire on, but an honest character and an old house, which, having served

the family in evil as well as prosperous days, was now in a crazy condition.

It would have been difficult to decide which mansion was the worst for wear and weather; but Andrew's was certainly the most populous. While Karl's family consisted of his wife and his daughter Joan, Andrew's household included, besides himself and his helpmate, three daughters and a son, two maiden sisters, who had lived there since his marriage, an aged aunt, who said there were none of her relations fit to be dwelt with but Andrew, and an old negro man, who had served the family from his youth.

Ever since the earliest settlement of the firm in Amsterdam, the Cramers had been regarded as its plebeian side. The aristocratic Van had never pre-faced their name, nor could they reckon a burgomaster among their ancestors. Matters, however, were more than equalised. The number depending on Andrew's scanty resources made absolute penury in his house, while only frugality prevailed in that of his neighbour. His daughters went out to service, his son sailed in a Baltic trader; while Karl's Joan continued at home with her parents, and Karl remained what he had ever been, close of hand, hard of reckoning, and the uncompromising critic of his sometime partner. Their long commercial alliance and common misfortune kept alive a kind of grumbling friendship between the broken merchants. Andrew said, if Karl had gone bravely on with him in a venture of dragon's blood, things would not have come to that pass. Karl said Andrew would bring down the stadtholder, with his great family and wild speculations. But, the winter of Holland having set in with keener frosts and heavier fogs than usual, immediately after they gave up the warehouse, neither could find employment suitable to the capacity of sixty and the remnants of merchant pride; so it became their custom to meet in each other's houses every Saturday evening, and smoke with Dutch deliberation over their prospects.

Saturday was a notable day in Amsterdam at the period of our story. The strength of Holland's domestic industry being yet unrelaxed, housewives of every degree were expected to have their entire dwelling scrubbed from garret to cellar. Spinning-wheels and all varieties of quiet work were therefore laid aside for the day; the whole female population rose in full activity with mop and broom, and the honest Dutchmen found almost as much to do in keeping themselves out of the way. From the early morning they sought refuge in exchange, coffee-house, or beer-shop; but as evening drew on, every man hastened home. Order was by that time generally restored within the walls, while a turmoil not less dreaded began without. Windows, doors, and all manner of outside stairs, had to be scoured with a liberal allowance of water, cold and hot, and without hesitation on account of passengers in the narrow streets. That was the last of Saturday's peculiar duties, and most people thought the sooner it was done the better; for friends and families then assembled to discuss the local news, to share an extra good supper, and, among the piously disposed, to wind up the week with a solemn thanksgiving.

That brief period of relaxation had come to hard-working Amsterdam. The traffic of the day was

over, and the scouring nearly done. The oil lamps that lighted its streets glimmered faintly through a thick and mouldy smelling fog which rose from the many canals, and here and there passed the clank of heavy pattens, on which man, woman, and child walked to and from the newly scrubbed houses; for March winds had melted the winter's frost, and the time of mud was come. Being a street of known respectability, the Skipper's Lane had every window-sill and door-step as white as sand could make them before the twilight fell, particularly at the house of Andrew Wybes (the Van had been prudently dispensed with, as no longer suitable to his fortunes); and poor as the family were, they held a sort of festival that Saturday evening.

The parlour, which had not been opened except on scouring days since Andrew's retirement from business, was lighted with one wax candle, showing, in all their ancient Dutch gentility, its walls covered with crimson embossed leather, its floor and hearth of many-coloured tiles, and its furniture, of massive form and dark mahogany, polished like so many mirrors. The hand of dexterous economy had striven against poverty there, nor was it less conspicuous in the silver-buttoned jackets, cambric aprons, and old lace caps of the reduced gentlewomen, young and old, who sat in a close circle at one side of the stove, knitting and talking low among themselves.

Andrew's three daughters, Grace, Sybil, and Beken, were there, on short leave of absence from their respective mistresses. Comely girls were they, though bearing traces of early toil and care. With them sat Joan Cramer, looking like a fourth and younger sister. Near by was Joan's mother, a dame who loved the good things and grandeur of this world so well, that the loss of them made her permanently sour and out of sorts. Close to her sat the maiden sisters, solid useful ladies of the old Dutch school, but growing greyer and more poverty-stricken every day. The aged aunt was more than half asleep in her chair in the chimney-corner: and, spreading the supper of brown bread, toasted cheese, and beer, as became one of Holland's matrons, was one in whom grey hairs and poverty had not altered the good-humoured thoughtful look, or changed the honest hopeful heart. It was Andrew's good wife; her neighbours called Dame Wybes the Frisian vrow, because, being early left an orphan, she had come from her native province, West Friesland, to live with an uncle in Amsterdam, and retained much of the peculiar dialect and appearance of her people, of whom it is said that they are descended from the same Anglo-Saxon race, and bear a strong resemblance to the English.

The vrow's uncle was neither rich nor generous, and Andrew had married her without a dowry, which Karl reckoned the worst of all his partner's speculations; but the money-trusting man did not understand the safe and kindly wisdom in which she had brought up Andrew's children, or the sunshine which, in spite of losses and failure, her presence had made in his home for more than thirty years.

Her husband knew it well, and as he sat at his own side of the stove (for Amsterdam etiquette was strictly maintained in that house), memories

of the cheerful patience with which she had borne their continued reverses, of the gentle deeds and wise words that so often comforted him in spite of misfortune, came up to Andrew as it were through the curling clouds of his grandfather's stone china pipe, which he smoked according to custom.

Karl Cramer, stiff, sturdy, and keen of eye, puffed no less vigorously by his side; but he was in deeper than ordinary cogitations, and cast calculating looks now on Andrew, and now on Andrew's son, in honour of whom that meagre feast was held; for his vessel had dropped anchor in the Amstel after a six months' absence, having, like many a Baltic trader in those days, wintered at Vyborg.

Oliver, or as his people called him, Auke Wybes, was just twenty-two, and was thought to resemble his Frisian mother; but he had been at sea ever since fifteen, and seven years' striving with wind and tide had given the frank face and muscular frame a weather-beaten, middle-aged look. Seated there in his sailor's dress of thick canvass, with his Danish pipe in full play, Auke might have passed for one of those hardy skippers, from whom in earlier times the street was named. Nevertheless, he was a worthy son to his over-burdened parents. His earnings on board the Baltic trader had been more than half the family support, and Auke had climbed through every grade of seamanship, from reefing the foresail to managing the compass.

His arrival was always a joyful event at home, especially to his mother. The good dame loved and cared for all her children, but her thoughts were often with the absent son, who braved the dangers of the deep; and his messmates knew that Auke's first inquiry of friend or acquaintance was, "Is my mother well?"

There had been a time when Karl Cramer speculated on a match between his partner's son and his own daughter. The young people didn't think that event impossible yet, and hoped for better days; but Karl had now a cherished conviction that Auke would never be worth a stiver. The young sailor, however, brought home such news as directed his Saturday night's musings to another channel. The skipper or captain with whom he had made so many voyages in the good ship "Zuyder Zee," was at once the owner and builder of that substantial craft. It was Jacob Steenhold's boast that he and Peter the Great had worked in the same dock at Saardam, and himself could beat the autocrat of all the Russias at almost everything. Into the verity of that statement Auke never inquired; but his trusty courage and nautical skill had won the skipper's heart, though more given to gain than friendship. By carrying cheese and gin to the Baltic towns, and salt fish back to Amsterdam, honest Jacob had realised a sufficient capital to embark in the trade with England. Its late king had been Holland's stadtholder, and London had a profitable market for tea and other Chinese wares, of which Amsterdam was the emporium. The Baltic trader would not suit this more distinguished line of business. Jacob intended to build a new ship, but it was necessary to dispose of the "Zuyder Zee;" and after deliberating on the subject throughout his two last voyages, he gave Auke an extraordinary proof of his esteem, by offering him the vessel, to be paid

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for in yearly instalments with interest at five per cent. The young man caught at the proposal with some gratitude and more hope. The prospect of sailing and trading in a ship of his own comprised both honour and profit; but he had come home to take counsel on the business, and if possible persuade Karl Cramer (who, being the least encumbered, had still a sort of credit with his old friends, the dealers in cheese and Hollands) to use his interest in getting up the first cargo.

"She is a slow sailer and rough in the rigging," said Auke, winding up the pro and con of his case; "but she goes well before the wind, and will take lading with any craft; and if it be your advice that I take her, father, we will give her a coat of paint and a new figure-head, and call her the 'Frisian Vrow,' for my mother."

"Thou art a good sort of a boy, Auke," said Andrew, laying down his pipe. "Thy plan has prudence in it; but what says neighbour Karl?"

"Young hands have little surety!" replied Karl, as they sat down to supper; but his mind was made up, and though the proverbs he quoted and the questions he asked were both numerous and varied, it was finally ascertained that not only did Karl intend raising the greater part of the cargo on his own responsibility, but also sailing with Auke on the first voyage, to superintend the trade and make sure of his profits.

So the Saturday night's supper was finished, and the thanksgiving offered. Dame Wybes was particular on that matter. The poor family and Joan also closed the week with a sort of anxious hope in the new undertaking. Dame Cramer grumbled privately that her husband should fill Auke's ship with his credit; but her grumbling was little minded, and for many weeks Karl was as busy as a bee, interesting his friends, making hard bargains, and looking after the repairs of the ship as if he had been its sole proprietor. It was a great disappointment to him that Auke wouldn't call his vessel "Hammerman Van Harderhold," after the director of the Dutch East India Company; but no change of name could be effected. Andrew sold the last remnants of family plate, including his own and his wife's drinking cup, to send a venture of fine linen with his son; and by the end of May the "Frisian Vrow," newly painted and deeply laden, was ready to sail under Auke's command, with the old crew, who volunteered to serve for their share of the profits.

"Farewell, my son," said his good mother, as she took leave of him at her door in the grey of the summer morning. "Forget not us at home, and in all thy goings remember that God's service hath sure wages."

"I will remember that, and all the good things you have taught me, mother; but keep a brave heart and take no disquiet for me," said the young skipper; and within the hour he and his ship were going down the Amstel.

[TO BE CONTINUED.]

CHINESE BANKING.

It is well known that paper money has been for centuries used in China, and treatises on the ancient practice have appeared by European Chinese

scholars; but in a paper read a few years ago before the Asiatic Society, by Mr. Alcock, "On the Paper Currency and Banking System of Fuh-chow-foo," there is to be found, for the first time perhaps, a detail of the practical working of the system, by one who has been placed in a position to see its action and results.

It appears that the government system of paper-money, from various causes, more especially the bad faith of the rulers and want of confidence in the people, gradually grew out of use more than two centuries ago, and no attempts were made to revive it; but the Chinese people, seeing the real value of the expedient, have kept it among themselves as a regular trade, depending only on the personal credit of the parties exercising it, without any support or guarantee of the authorities. A want of uniformity of system necessarily follows from this; and the paper of one part of the country will be of no use in a distant quarter. The description of the trade of Fuh-chow-foo, therefore, will be found to suit exactly that place only. It is understood that, until within a recent period, the paper money of Fuh-chow-foo was merely a plan by parties known to each other of giving notes of hand when cash was scarce, and these notes were taken only by such parties; that it was not until some considerable interval had elapsed that the issue of such notes became a separate occupation; and until about fifty years ago the trade was small. At that period it began to grow into favour; by 1815 notes of all amounts were in circulation, and paper is now nearly the sole circulating medium of the entire province, the native coin being almost wholly superseded. The perfectly unrestricted way in which any one may issue notes, has at times led to an over-issue and consequent depreciation; but the great competition resulting has had on the whole a good effect; and, by giving the public a choice out of a large number, it has confined all transactions of any considerable amount to parties in whom confidence could be placed. From the nature of the security, these banks cannot assist the merchant in the remittance of money to any distant places, nor do they take money in deposit for making payments by cheque. They will take deposits, paying interest at nine and a half per cent., but only as a personal favour; and they require the whole of the deposit to be retained or withdrawn in one amount.

This does not appear, however, to be the case in the more northern provinces. The banking establishments in the city and the suburbs are reckoned by hundreds; but the number of those of any stability is about thirty, with capitals varying from half a million to upwards of a million dollars each. This wealthy class forms a distinct body, which, by co-operation, regulates the market. Their notes are very rarely below par; they pass current with all parties, and are readily cashed by any of the body. These bankers keep some twenty men in their general employ, whose business it is to attend the markets and report to their employers everything that is passing; and the bankers, upon their reports, determine the relative prices of notes, bullion, and dollars.

A considerable part of the business of the bankers is the refining of silver for payment of

taxes to the government, which must always be done in ingots of a certain size and purity; and a pretty large per centage is allowed them for this trouble. They also realise a good profit by making similar payments to the custom-house for merchants, when required to be made in the same way. Another source of profit is derived from the pawnbrokers' shops, which are very numerous in China. These establishments receive a high interest for their loans, and they generally refuse anything in repayment but copper cash and bank notes; and each shop has its own banker, whose notes alone it will receive. Such a connection is obviously profitable; and no banker can carry on a large trade without one. Some bankers have pawnbroker shops of their own; and one is known to have opened five in different parts of the city. Bankruptcies are very rare, and are almost confined to the smaller banks; they are usually settled by private arrangement, without reference to the authorities; and the defaulters have in most instances paid ten or twelve shillings in the pound. Forgery is seldom practised, and only for small notes. The highest punishment is transportation to the distance of 1000 miles; but it is more usually imprisonment or corporeal castigation. In one instance a notorious forger, who had been several times prosecuted, was taken into the pay of the body, and was found a very effective instrument in detecting the impositions of others. The bank notes are longer but much narrower than ours. They are surrounded by an elaborate border, studded with sentences recommendatory of the firm, which gives them a pretty appearance. They are usually printed from copperplate, but some of the smaller banks find it more economical to use the ordinary wooden blocks. They represent copper cash, dollars, or sycee, and vary in value from about 16s. 3d. each, to above 100l. sterling.

INTRODUCTORY LESSONS ON MORALS.

LESSON VIII.—REGULATION OF CONSCIENCE.

§ 1. *Conscience never to be opposed.*

You have seen that, as man's conscience is not infallible, you must not at once conclude that you are right when you are acting according to the dictates of conscience. And yet you may be sure that you are wrong if you are acting *against* it. For, if you do what you believe to be wrong, even though you may be mistaken in thinking so, and it may be in reality right, still you yourself will be wrong.

And this is what the apostle Paul means when he says, "Happy is he that condemneth not himself in that thing which he alloweth," Rom. xiv. 22; and "Whatsoever is not of faith, is sin;" that is, whatsoever is not done with a full conviction [faith] that it is allowable, is, to him, sinful; and he condemns himself in doing it.

And on this principle he alludes (in 1 Cor. x.) to the case of some of the "weaker brethren" [the less intelligent] among the early christian converts, who thought that the flesh of animals which had been offered in sacrifice to idols was unclean, and not to be eaten. He does not at all

himself partake of this scruple, considering it a matter of no consequence, in a religious or moral point of view, what kind of food a man eats. But he teaches that those who do feel such a scruple would be wrong in eating that flesh, and "their conscience being weak is defiled." And he teaches also that it would be wrong for any one to induce others to do what *they* think sinful, though it be something that is not sinful to one who does not think it so.

In such a case as this, both parties are acting rightly, if the one eats what he is convinced is allowable, and the other abstains from what he thinks is not allowable; provided always that neither of them uncharitably censures or derides his neighbour. "Let not him that eateth," says Paul, "despise him that eateth not; and let not him that eateth not, judge him that eateth." And "Let every man be fully persuaded in his own mind." Rom. xiv. 5.

§ 2. *A wrong Principle makes it impossible to act rightly.*

But there are some cases in which a man who has been brought up in some wrong system, or who in any way has taken up some false principle, may hold himself bound in duty to do what is in itself wrong. And in such a case he cannot but go wrong, whichever course he may take, till his moral judgment has been set right.

For instance, if a jury have formed a false opinion as to some case tried before them, either from their having been biassed by their feelings and prejudices, or from not having listened with sufficient attention to the witnesses and the arguments on both sides, it is impossible for them, while in this state of mind, to give a right verdict. For, a verdict according to the wrong opinion they have formed, would, of course, be a wrong one; and yet no one would say that, while they do hold that opinion, they would be right in giving a contrary verdict.

Again, the doctrine has been distinctly maintained (in a protestant book, published a few years ago), that "the magistrate who restrains, coerces, and punishes those who oppose a true religion and seek to propagate a false one, obeys the *will of God*, and is not a *persecutor*." Now suppose any magistrate to have embraced this doctrine, believing—as of course he must—his own religion to be true, and those opposed to it false, he will, of course, hold himself bound in duty to establish a system of what, in the ordinary sense of the word, is called "persecution;" though he may satisfy himself by not calling it by its real name. And if, through tenderness of feeling, he should spare any whom he accounts heretics, he will consider himself as disobeying God's will. Such a man, therefore, as long as he is in this state of mind, "not knowing what manner of spirit he is of," cannot possibly be right, whichever course he may take.

Any one, therefore, whose conscience has been in any way depraved, and who is proceeding on some wrong principle, cannot possibly act rightly, whether he act according to his conscience, or against it, till he is cured of that defect in his moral judgment.

§ 3. *Careful Study needed for good Conduct.*

You can see plainly, therefore, that one who is sincerely anxious to lead a virtuous life has need of diligent study and care, to learn what his duty is in each case, as well as of firm resolution in keeping steadily to the course his conscience points out. You must not be satisfied with doing what you think right—that is, with thinking that to be right which you do—unless you have also taken pains to form a right judgment. Nor must you be satisfied with opening the Bible at random, and taking for your direction any passage that happens to meet your eye; or again, looking out for some passage that may be so interpreted as to justify the course you are inclined to take. And you should not listen to any one who would persuade you that no careful study is needed in order to learn and practise your duty; and that any such lessons as these now before you may be thrown aside as useless; and that if you have but a right faith, and pray for divine guidance, your religion will at once make you a good man, without any pains or watchfulness as to your moral character being required.

The Scriptures themselves, if you will listen to them, will teach you quite otherwise. Our Lord bids his disciples “*watch* and pray lest ye enter into temptation.” We must *pray* as if *nothing* depended on ourselves, and we must *watch* as if *everything* depended on ourselves. And He and his apostles exhort us to “*strive*”—to “*run*”—to “*give all diligence*” in our christian course, and to “*work out our own salvation with fear and trembling,*” that is, with anxious care—on the very ground that it is “*God that worketh in us, both to will and to do of his good pleasure.*”

§ 4. *Divine Blessing bestowed on diligent Care.*

And it is thus that every man of common sense proceeds in all the concerns of ordinary life, when he is thoroughly in earnest. A gardener, for instance, knows very well that the fertility of the earth, and the life of all his plants, are God's gift; and that, without the rain and sunshine from heaven, his trees would bear no fruit. But he does not satisfy himself with merely praying for favourable seasons, and then leaving his garden to the care of Providence. He digs and manures the ground, and he not only takes care of the roots of his fruit trees, but also endeavours to protect the blossoms from blighting winds and noxious insects. And even so, we are bound not only to take care about a right *faith*, which is the root of christian virtue, but also to bestow vigilant care on the moral character itself.

So also, if any one is endeavouring to learn some art or trade by which to maintain himself, though he will, if he be a pious man, beg the Divine blessing on his exertions, he will not omit those exertions. He knows indeed that his hands, and eyes, and ears, and understanding, are all Divine gifts; but he knows also that he must diligently and carefully exercise all the faculties that have been bestowed upon him, and lose no opportunity of gaining useful instruction in his business. Now, to improve one's moral character is the business of *every* man. And as no one can

think this a matter of less importance than any of the various arts of life, so we have no reason to expect that, in this great concern, God will bestow that blessing on the negligent which, in everything else, he reserves for the diligent.

LINES SUGGESTED BY READING OF JOHN HOWARD'S DEATH IN THE CRIMEA.

How turns the heart of England
To the far Euxine strand,
With a dreary dream of tents and graves,
And a brave but wasted band,
Whose story long shall give to fame
Her soldiers' deeds, her statesmen's shame!
Yet once a war of nobler aim
Closed in that Tartar land.

The Goth hath met the Mongul,
The Greek hath met the Hun,
Beside the broad Borysthenes
Where ancient fields were won.
But there the morn was breaking slow
On hamlet, huts, and plains of snow,
And one beheld its first faint glow,
Whose stirring days were done.

His last low bed was lonely,
His land was far away,
The blight of household hopes had fallen
Upon his waning day.
Yet was the brave heart strong and true,
And clearer on its vision grew
The land where all things are made new
And Love hath no decay.

Perchance he knew the nations
Might bless the churchyard stone,*
That made his pleasant English home
To him so sad and lone.
For in that solitude of heart
He heard the call, and chose his part,
And so went forth through waste and mart,
A champion all unknown.

From that bright wave of story
Which round fair Venice sweeps,
To where the city of the czar
Her watch on Neva keeps,
Men trace the march of his long strife,
With peril and adventure rife,
As ever was a warrior's life,
On Fame's most stormy steep.

He warred with sin and sorrow,
Even in their sternest hold;
In the prison and the lazar house,
In the custom hard and old,
In laws so blind and barbarous then,
Unschool'd by pulpit or by pen,
And in the moveless minds of men,
And in the night of gold.

The glory of his conquests
From land to land was showered,
Wherever walked the pestilence,
Or crime in darkness cowered.
Woe for the world! 'tis wasted still
By many a varied host of ill.
Lord, to thy servants lend the skill
And fearless *faith* of Howard!

FRANCES BROWN.

London, 1855.

* It is recorded that Howard did not enter on his general mission of philanthropy till after the death of his second wife.

Poetry.

SUMMER.

How beautiful is summer when the bee is on the wing,
And on the clustering hazel boughs the linnets sit and sing;
Bright glad some days of sunshine, the weary heart to cheer,
And chase the shades of sadness from the anxious brow of care.

How beautiful at morning on some eminence to stand,
And gaze with grateful feelings on our fair and happy land,
In calm and peace reposing beneath His gracious eye
Who watches o'er his Israel from his dwelling-place on high.

How beautiful the fields in their jewelled robe of green,
And the cool and shady lanes where the sun is seldom seen;
Where at eve we love to wander, and breathe the scented air,
Perfumed with sweetest odour from the honeysuckle there.

How beautiful the billows that toss their foam on high,
And the placid lake reposing beneath a cloudless sky,
The sparkling silver fountain, in the cool delicious shade,
And the lowly streamlet murmuring through the green
and verdant glade.

How beautiful the yellow gorse in martial panoply,
The lilac and the guelder rose in her pure white array,
And golden-tressed laburnum her silent watches keeping
Over the infant rosebuds which are sweetly sleeping.

How beautiful the happy homes where England's sons are
reared,
But more happy still and hallowed where God is loved and
feared;

Where at morning and at evening is heard the voice of
prayer,
Commending every loved one to a Father's tender care.

We see no ruined villages or scorched and blasted trees,
No shrieks and groans are wafted on the sighing evening
breeze.

Oh God! we humbly thank thee, thou hast spared our
guilty laud,

From the desolating scourge of thy sin-avenging hand.

MARY EUGENIA.

THE FOX AND THE CROW.

MEN deemed, in the world's early time,
That wisdom sounded best in rhyme;
Then let an humble bard rehearse
An ancient tale in modern verse.

'Twas in that age to poets known,
When mankind did not talk alone,
But beasts of earth and fowls of air
In conversation took their share.

A crow that from the nest had ventured
And on the world of ravens entered,
Just as the summer's deepening green
Was tinged with autumn's golden sheen,

Forth flying in the early grey,
By a lone farm-house took her way,
And found—oh! wondrous chance and rare—
The dairy window open there.

Nor here had fortune's favour stayed,
For on the sill within was laid
A noble slice of new-cut cheese:
One moment served to see and seize.

How sped the crow I scarce can tell,
O'er house and farm and neighbouring fell,
Escaping, with unbroken bones,
Both scolding maids and flying stones.

At last within a woodland free
She rested on a tall oak tree,
To feast at leisure and make merry
On better fare than corn or berry.

A sleeping fox beneath the oak
Beheld her coming as he woke,
And thought, since hens began to fail,
That cheese might make a morning meal.

"Oh! what a beauteous bird!" he cries,
Like one who speaks from sheer surprise,
With look amazed and sudden start,
And paw pressed upward on his heart.

"That lovely bill! that glossy wing!
Could such a charming creature sing,
No dweller in the forest wide
Before her could have cause for pride."

The flatterer's voice was far below,
Yet reached the heart of Madam Crow;
For ne'er had one so well defined
Her place among the feathered kind.

She shook her wing, she tossed her head,
The feathers on her tail she spread,
And thought it did not well become
Her rank that he should think her dumb.

But ere his ears could catch her caw,
Her cheese was in the fox's maw,
And Reynard, laughing, scoured away,
Through the deep thicket with his prey.

My youthful friends, the years before you
May need the moral of the story;
For life is full of snares and labours,
And gain and loss are oft near neighbours.

The cunning flattery which allures
With praise for gifts which are not yours,
Whatever vanity it please,
Is but the fox that wants the cheese.

THE GALL-FLY.

TOIL on, toil on, thou industrious Bee,
'Tis pleasant thy labours and skill to see;
To watch thee at work in thy waxen cells,
With pollen and nectar from floweret's bells.

Plod on, plod on, ye unwearied Ants,
Provide in the summer for winter's wants;
New wonders unfold while your structures arise,
With all their arrangements so neat and wise.

Spin on, spin on, thou soft silk-weaving Worm,
For marvellous works thy weak tools perform;
How varied the stuffs and tissued brocade
Woven from cones by thy industry made!

Rove on, rove on, vagrant Butterfly fly,
On thy wings of gossamer range the air;
How wondrous thy start into life and light,
From thy mummy wrappers so mean to sight!

Sing on, sing on, trilling Grasshoppers gay,
For merry the tune your musicians play;
'Tis welcome to hear such good-omened song
When sorrow or care to the heart belong!

Dance on, dance on, sparkling Fire-flies bright,
Hang Nature's vast hall with your lamps of light;
'Tis cheering to think how the traveller's way
Is guided alone by your starry ray!

Frisk on, frisk on, ye ephemeral race,
Exult on the water in sportive chase;
'Tis pleasant to watch your eccentric rings,
Till you rise from the stream on buoyant wings.

Yes, pleasant, when thus to our open gaze,
Kind Nature, so courteous, her works displays;
But pleasanter still, when the veil she draws,
And discovers behind, her secret laws.

Strange insects at work on the lofty trees,
Which the eye of the curious only sees;
Unsheathing their piercer, the leaf to tap,
And press from its vessels their fresh green sap.

The small scarlet Coccus and oak Gall-fly,
That secretes in a ball its deep black dye;
Here the eye may the bright red hue prefer,
But the heart is the best interpreter.

For it is to this Gall-fly juice we owe
A free channel for friendship's thoughts to flow;
By this means the poet and man of mind
Embody their thoughts and enrich mankind.

Work on, then, work on, thou precious Gall-fly,
For Scholar and Muse depend on thy dye;
Bees, Ants, and Silk-worms may cease from their skill,
So we lose not the fluid thy labours distil!

ELLEN ROBERTS.